

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

the fire of sweet charity, where they are consumed. Hope and be assured that the divine grace has pardoned you them." " You must chiefly labour together with the Holy Father, to the utmost of your power, in removing the wolves and incarnate demons of pastors who attend to nought save eating, and goodly palaces, and stout horses. Alas, that what Christ acquired upon the wood of the Cross is spent upon harlots ¹ I pray you that, even if you have to die for it, you tell the Holy Father to find a remedy for such great iniquities, and, when the time comes to make pastors and cardinals, not to make them for the sake of flattery nor for money nor for simony ; but, with all your power, pray him to heed and consider whether he finds virtue and good and holy repute in the man, and not to consider whether he is noble or plebeian ; for virtue is the thing that makes man noble and pleasing to God."*

This year, 1373, was marked by innumerable dissensions and homicides, especially among the religious and clergy. The Sienese chronicler declares that the Augustinian friars murdered their provincial at Sant' Antonio (a convent of the order in the Sienese contado near the Bagni of Petriuolo) ; that, at Assisi, the Friars Minor fought with knives, and fourteen were killed; and at Siena a young friar in San Domenico killed another, and every convent was divided against itself. The same thing went on outside the convents ; every order in the State was rent with plots and petty treasons ; " and so the world is one darkness." ² The new Senator of Siena, Count Lodovico da Mogliano from the Marches, who entered upon office in February—^{ec} a man of discreet years, pacific and wise, who gave good hope to all the citizens "— attempted to restore order by impartial executions of noble and plebeian criminals alike ; but the only result was a series of riots, in which his own life was threatened, and all his household ran great risks of being massacred by the Sienese populace.⁸

Three of Catherine's letters bear the impress of these events. Writing to Pletro, priest of Semignano in the Sienese contado,

¹ Letter 109 (4.1). ² *Cronica Sanetf*, col. 438.

⁸ *Ibid.*, coll. 235, 236 ; O. Malavolti, p. 141.